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A

SERMON

Prcached in the

Colledge Church

OF

St KATHARIN'S,

FEBRUAEY the 13*th* 1698.

By *JOSIA POVEY*, Brother and Miniſter there.

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To the READER.

I Uſed many Arguments to perſwade my Auditors to deſiſt in their deſires of raſhly paſſing this Diſcourſe from the Pulpit to the Preſs, but not prevailing, I fear the uncharitable will Carp at the Inchoherence, *&c.*

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A SERMON

Preached in the Colledge Church of

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February the 13*th* 1698.

PSALM 119. Part of the 1*ſt* Verſe.

Bleſſed are the Undefiled in the way.

THAT all things do naturally act and are deſign'd to ſome extream and ultimate end of their being, is a Truth ſo ſecure, either from being deny'd by *Philoſophers*, or diſputed by *Divines*, that none who enjoy a moderate uſe of their Reaſon, but will equally pretend to an Evidence and Demoſtration of it. Thus to be exiſtent and to have a Natural propenſion to ſome chief and final End, are terms both

Inſeperable and Convertible; and that innate Principle whereby every thing is inclin'd to proſecute its own well being and perfection, is no leſs Neceſſary then Univerſal: Neither are they leſt deſtitute of means for the attainment of a proper and peculiar End; Nay, all things are naturally inveſted with particular Inſtincts and Imbred Faculties, whereby they are enabled for the proſecution of Hapineſs. All Vegitables are qualified with faculties, whereby they are impoured to ſpring out of the Earth and to grow up to Maturity, and naturally produce Seeds and Fruits, by which their Species is Multiplied and Perpetuated; The ſenſitive Creatures being Endued with quick and acurate Senſes, have a lively perception of Pleaſure and Pain, and carried on with a vigorous and active Propenſion towards thoſe pleaſures of Sens. Being enabled to reſiſt things unpleaſant, and Elect thoſe that are grateful, as if they apprehended the means and the end in which does conſiſt their higheſt happineſs; nor is Mankind a jaring Noat in this great and Univerſal Harmony, but all of them, how different ſoever in their Degrees, Fortunes, or Humours, yet by a general conſent do agree in this one deſire of being Bleſſed. This is the great end that all their projects and contrivances do propoſe, this is the Goal to which the whole courſe of their lives is only directed, this is the reward which all contend for, and every one expects to obtain; in this agree the Godly and the Wicked,

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the Pure and Debaucht, *Remember me O Lord with the favour that thou beareſt unto thy People; O viſit me with thy Salvation or Bleſſedneſs*, Sings the Divine *Pſalmiſt*. *Let me die the death of the Righteous*, ſaith *Balaam, and let my laſt end be like his, that is, be Bleſſed.* Thus this eager appetite of being happy, is ſo incorporated with our Natures, that nothing can divorce that deſire, but diſſolution; we may with as great facility, new Model our frames, as Extinguiſh this lively Principle, it bearing the ſame date with our exiſtence, and cannot be put out, while we are yet not diſſolved into our Primitive Nothing; ſo that its Demonſtrable, all court Hapines, but moſt miſtake wherein it conſiſts, one thinks its ſeated on the top Pinacle of Honour, ſo with proud *Sejanus*, climbs ſo high till he tumbles head-long; another with *Mydas*, thinks it a *Mineral* that muſt be dig'd out of the Earth, ſo toils to load himſelf with this thick Clay, till he finds a Grave where he ſought his Treaſure; and indeed moſt think Hapineſs to conſiſt in worldly fruitions which ſatisfie ſens, and not in being undefil'd, which only can give delectation to the Soul: and ſince it is ſo, ſhall take this Method.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew you Particularly and Negatively wherein Hapineſs does not conſiſt.

Secondly, Shall ſhew you in General and Affirmatively,

tively, werein it does conſiſt, and how to compaſs that Bleſſed State.

Thirdly, What it is to be Undefil'd, and when we may be eſteemed ſo.

And Laſtly, Shall give you the Bleſſed Conſequents of ſo being.

Firſt, I ſhall ſhew you (Particularly and Negatively) wherin Bleſſedneſs does not conſiſt.

Firſt, It (does not or) cannot conſiſt in Riches.

Secondly, In Honours.

Thirdly, In Beauty.

Fourthly, In Humane knowledg.

Fifthly, In long Life.

Laſtly, That a Concurrence and Combination of all theſe cannot make one Man happy.

Firſt, Riches cannot render us truly Bleſt and Happy, for that cannot do it that is not deſirable for its own Excellency, but for its uſe and ſubſerviency to the more Ignoble part of Man, and never ſatisfies, for the more

a carnal Man has of them, the more he covets, ſo that you may as readily extinguiſh Fire by puting on of Fuel, or fill a Cheſt with Knowledge, as ſatisfie a Mans deſires with Riches. The *Macedonian* Monarch, when he had Conquer'd the World was ſo far from being contented, that he Wept becauſe he could not find out another.

Secondly, That which is got with much care, and cannot be ſecured, can never make happy, and that Riches are ſo, St. *Mathew* aſſures us in the 13. and 22. there he compares them to Thorns, to ſhew their vexation: *Hoſea* the 12. and 1. to Wind, to ſhew their incertainty; And Experience tells us, That he who Enjoys the greateſt hapineſs in them, wants one more a ſecurity for the future of what he poſſeſſes at preſent; Do not think, ſays *Polycarp*, that thick Clay which has paſt through ſo many Hands will ever ſtick to thy Fingers; Wilt thou ſet thy Heart on that which is not, ſays *Solomon*, for Riches take themſelves Wings and fly away, they have not only Feet to walk off from us, but Wings and fly away from us; And he that aſſures himſelf of their continuance with him, is as much infatuated as the *Ruſtick* that thought himſelf for ever happy, when a flight of Birds Lodg'd on his Farm, purpos'd to feed Deliciouſly every day, and at night to ſleep in Down, but alas! he was ſoon diſapointed, for they ſuddenly took Wing, and went to his Neighbour; at beſt the moſt

moſt ſecure Miſer can never have better Fortune, then the Fool in the Goſpel, For if Riches go not from a man, he muſt go from them, for Riches cannot deliver from Death, nor be of any value to a Man in the Grave: He that dies worth ten Pounds is as happy then as he that dies worth ten hundred thouſand; *Grudg not*, ſaith the *Pſalmiſt*, *tho' a man be made Rich, and the Glory of his Houſe encreaſed, for he ſhall carry nothing with him when he Dies, neither ſhall his Pomp follow him.* Yet how many with *Judas* ſell their Salvation for Silver, and looſe Heaven to engroſs Earth. I cannot ſee when we have thoſe things that are neceſſary in that State werein God hath placed us, what ſatisfaction there is to view a maſs of Treaſure, which we brought not into this world with us, only heapt together, and ſo leave not the world Richer or Poorer then we found it: only fetch a few turns on the Theatre and entertain the beholders with a ſhort Scene of Impertinences, then deſcend and are never heard of more, and only enrich the Clods with our Avaritious Carcaſes, amongſt which we muſt ſhortly lye down: If abundance had been the only Bleſſing, our Saviour would have left it to his Diſciples, and Servants, but in his laſt Will and Teſtament, he did not ſay, My Riches or Honours I give unto you, but my Peace; for that ſollid and laſting joys are in the peace of the mind; Yet what a ſcramble and hurry deluded Mortals make about them, as if the chief and only

only happineſs conſiſted in them, when the way to be Bleſſed is not to make their Eſtates greater, but their Spirits and Deſires lower.

Thirdly, Honour cannot make us bleſt and happy. That which is attended with Cares, Fears, and Incertainties, cannot do it.

And Firſt, That Honour is attended with Cares, Princes, and others in Power, experience, who riſe early, and lye down late, to receive Addreſſes, and read Petitions, ſo that Honour muſt be full of Cares, and uneaſie to them that have it.

But Secondly, It muſt be attended with Fears, becauſe moſtly Envied by thoſe that have it not; ſo conſequently none can be ſafe, ſince Honours Principal dependance reſts on the vain and falſe opinion, and diſſembled Favour of Men, who oft *Hoſannah* him one day, that is called *Belial* on the morrow; Alas, the moſt Honourable is not altogether unlike a King in a Play, no longer Acting a Majeſtick Part then the Spectators pleaſe; nay, the Favorit's of Crowns are like Court Dials, whereon all look whilſt the King ſhines on him, and none when night with him. But if Honour chance to laſt for Life, yet Death equals the Scepter and Spade; he that's the talleſt *Cædar* of *Libanon* to day, may to morrow

be like a rotten ſtick, trodden under foot, and meat for worms, and the pooreſt wretch wou'd not be like unto him, for when ſuch lay down their Scepter, and pay their tribute to the Tomb, then he that dwelt in his Palace, is Dirt in his Grave, as the Poor that creeps in his Cottage; nor can you then diſtinguiſh between the duſt of *Dives* or *Lazarus*, the duſt of him that Grinds in the Mill, or ſits on the Throne. Nay a little time and ingratitude renders the Monument and name of the greateſt Monarch, as ſilent as his Aſhes; thus it was with the gallant *Archimedes*.

But Thirdly, The uncertainty of Power beſpeaks its Vanity, its oft, like Lightning, Flaſhes in the face and is gone, and its well if it does not hurt the man; the ſmalleſt Cloud obſcures its Brightneſs, the leaſt ſtain blemiſhes its Beauty; nay the moſt trivial accident compleats oft its Deſtruction.

Former Ages have given us larger Teſtimonies of it, and our Age no Strangers to it: *Valerianus* Crown'd with the Imperial *Diadem*, was like a *Crane* kept in a Cage. *Marius* the Great General, and Mighty Warrior, begged his Bread at the Ruins of *Carthage*, where he had formerly Enricht his Soul with Victory; and *Zerxes* that Darkned the Air with his Arrows, was forc'd to eſcape in a Fiſhing Boat: Nay he that was Adorn'd with Royal

Royal Robes, and Sway'd the Scepter one day, was Veſted as a private Man, and Riſl'd by a Peaſant on the Morrow; which may teach us that its Grace, not Honour can make us truly Bleſt and Happy, and that its oft better to live in the Vallie, where the Storms blow over, than to Inhabit on the higheſt Hills, where continual Hurricanes diſturb, and not to keep that cheif in our Affections which we cannot ſecure in our Poſſeſſions (but to be practiſers of Piety, which will make us Honourable to all Eternity.)

Thirdly, Beauty without Grace cannot make Bleſt and Happy: That which may by every little accident be loſt, cannot make happy, and that Beauty is ſo, is evident, the leaſt Diſtemper decays it, a Fit of an *Ague*, *Small Pox*, or *Feaver* fades it, a few years out of the Grave, or a few moments in it, wholy ſpoiles it; Nor is Beauty the peculiar Prerogative of the rational being, for that the moſt Powerful and Charming is out-done by Birds and Flowers: Its only a colour'd piece of Clay, or like a fair Picture, take away the Varniſh, and ther's nothing: It's a Traytor in Retirement, and oft carries Poyſon and Diſapointments in its moſt Endearing Enjoyments. Its a *Hellena* that hurries to the Deſtruction of *Troy*: Its a *Dalilah* to intrap *Sampſon*: a *Jezabel* to infatuate *Ahab*: And a *Bathſheba* to allure *David*: And its Excellency without Piety is perceptible by none

but the Purblind, and its Charms, nay Exiſtence, is only derived from Deluſion and Empty Opinion. *Iſaiah* 3. 19, 20. *Eſteem not then the Daughters of* Jeruſalem, *but thoſe of* Zion, *whoſe Beauty is within: Who are Undefiled in the way, and walk in the Law of the Lord.*

Fourthly, Humane knowledge Abſtracted from Supernatural Grace, cannot make Bleſt and Happy, that which is attended with Vexation, Labour and Error cannot make happy, the wiſeſt of Mortals aſſures of the Firſt, our own Experience of the Latter; for Wiſdom, none Tranſcended *Solomon*, he underſtood Nature and Art, Words and Things, Intereſt of States, Intreagues of Court, for Policy and Government, none was like him, nor ſhall any arife hereafter comparable to him; yet he pronounces Humane Knowledge, vain and Vexatious. *In much Wiſdom*, ſays he, *there is much Grief, and he that encreaſes Knowledge, encreaſes Sorrow.*

Secondly our own Experience aſſures us, that the little knowledge we have, is got with much trouble, and our grief is Augmented that we underſtand no better; What we know is the leaſt part of what we know not, and the more we do know, the nearer we approach the Sun that blinds us; for ſince the Infernal Raven hath pick't out the Eyes of our Underſtanding, with a Splinter of the Tree of Knowledge, we only groap for Truth, and

and ſtumble at Error. Every Age brings forth new projects, as it does a new Generation of Men; every Age confutes old Errors, and begets new; ſo that Humane Knowledge makes no Man happy, nor does Bleſſedneſs conſiſt in Intellectuals, but to be Undefil'd in the way, that is Wiſdom, and to walk in the way of the Lord, that is Underſtanding, to know the Statutes of Heaven, and Laws of Eternity, makes happy; Abſtracted from theſe all our policy, only lights us into the Territories of Darkneſs, ſerves only as *Piſgahs* top did *Moſes*, ſhews us *Canaan*, never brings us thither. But the Study of Divine Wiſdom, exalts our Nature, preſents new pleaſures, fils the mind with Beautiful Ideas; is like a Travellor that aſcends, every new ſtep, enlarges his Horizon, and lights him to Everlaſting reſt.

Fifthly, Long Life cannot make bleſt and happy, that which Encreaſes trouble, cannot, and that long life does ſo; Experience Evidences, thoſe that ſee moſt days, ſee moſt miſeries, Coughs, Cares and Conſumptions, attend them, ſuch only Live to ſee their neareſt and deareſt Relations goe to the Grave before them. This made old *Peleus* Gray Head, go down with ſorrow to the Grave; this made *Hecuba* and others Bark with the Inhabitants of the *Kennel*, Howl amongſt the Tombs, and ſail to their Sepulchres in a Sea of tears. I might inſtance a thouſand more calamities incident to the life of man, ſo that

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were it not for the Expectations of another life, man would be the moſt miſerable of Animals in this; It was an apt Expreſſion of the Philoſopher upbraiding one that deſired long life, Ἥδε δειλὴ ψυχὴ καταρωρυγμένη ἐν σώματι. Ὡς ἕρπετον γοῦν ἐς φωλεὸν φιλεῖ τὸν φωλεόν.

Alaſs, ther's no object ſo deplorable as a Gray Head, and an Unſanctified Heart, but the Hoary Scalp is a Crown of Glory, and only to be deſired by ſuch as excel in Piety. Such aſpiring Spirits were not given us, to be tyed ever to a Periſhing Body; Nor can we think it worth the while, that the maker of the Univerſe ſhou'd Create a Soul, and ſend it down into the Body (or World) on purpoſe to ſuperintend theſe trivial affairs, to keep alive a ſilly piece of Earth, whilſt it Eats and Drinks, to move it too and fro in chaſe of Shadows, and to hold it up while others bow the Knee and do it Homage, No, our Creator has put us into this world in order to our Tranſlation to a better, we are not always to live among Mire, and be tyed to a Periſhing body; we come into this World not to take up our aboad and reſt, this life is only to Exerciſe our virtues, and qualify us for the world to come, we live not ſo much to Enjoy it, as to Conquer it's Temptations, and diſpiſe it's flatteries, and if we live long enough to do this we may thank God; for what Labouring man wou'd not willingly be at reſt, what Mariner is not glad that he hath weathered

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all Storms, and ſteer'd to his deſired Haven, where his ſoul ſhall Enjoy Divine pleaſure, to big to be deſcrib'd. When *Cræſus* ask'd *Solon*, who he thought happy? he told him one *Tellus*, a man that was dead, *for tho death breaks the Union between the Body and Soul, yet it cannot break that Union between the Soul and Chriſt, if undefil'd*; then why ſhould we think a Temporary Life ſuch a Felicity? then why ſhou'd it trouble us to leave men to live with Chriſt and Angels? why ſhou'd we be ſo unwilling to leave this body of duſt? where we ſhall ſin no more, be ſick no more, and troubled no more, but paſs from death to life, from a vally of tears to Eternal joys; then why ſhould we not with *Scipio* deſire to be diſſolved, when we hear of Immortality and Glory, undoubtedly death to him that is undefil'd in the way, is only as a paſſage through a dark entry into a Glorious Pallace, a putting of theſe Rags of the fleſh, and a puting on the Robes of Righteouſneſs, a laying down a Sheep-hook, and a taking up a Scepter, a laying down a Crown of Thorns, which Prick, Torture, and Torment us, and a putting on a Crown of Glory which will for ever Comfort and Delight us.

Laſtly, A concurrence and combination of all theſe cannot make ſo much as one man Happy, the *Heathen Philoſopher* in ſearch found a conveniency, but no αυταρχεία ſelf-ſufficiency; for if one man had all the

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Excellency and Power, all the Higheſt and Greateſt Treaſures and Glory under the Sun, had he all the Bodily perfections, which are diſtributed amongſt the numerous Train of mankind, and all conſpired together to make this one man happy, he wou'd infinitly come ſhort of his Deſign: And this miſerable one Perſon at laſt would wofully Experiment, that all theſe Glittering and Guilded Repreſentations, with which this flattering World had dazled and deceived his Eyes, were but like Painted Sepulchres, glorious and gay without, but within fill'd with Rottenneſs, Darkneſs, Horror and Death; or like *Egyptian* Temples, with a Specious outſide, but Inhabited with *Crocodiles* and *Dragons* inſtead of Gods; I ſay, had one man all the *Ethics* of *Ariſtotle*, all the *Morality* of *Seneca*, all the *Learning* at *Athens*, had he all the cuning and trickes of *Achitophel*, the ſtrength of *Goliah*, the Treaſures of *Nebuchadnezar*, the Honour of *Haman*, the Beauty of *Abſolon*: Nay, had he the knowledg of the *Scribes*, and the Devotion of the *Phariſes*, he would at laſt diſcover himſelf to be a ſtranger to true Felicity, and utterly unacquainted with the bleſt condition, and that on theſe following accounts.

At the Fall of our Firſt Parents the Earth was Curſt, ſo cannot yeild to Man any true Comfort; It muſt now bring forth Thorns and Bryers, that is Cares and Troubles,

bles, and ſo its a Deluſion to expect a ſecond Paradice here, or to hope for true Happineſs any where but in Heaven, becauſe all here is mutable, and we Mortal. Worldly comforts are tranſient and vaniſhing, they cannot extend themſelves to Eternity, and thus they want the very life and accompliſhment of true Tranquillity; here we cannot write for ever on our Riches, here we cannot write for ever on our Honours or Pleaſures, there will be a period put to all Humane Glory; all our Riches, Pomp, and Grandeur, muſt abandon us at the Frontiers of the Grave; ſix Foot and a Shrowd, then will ſerve

Indeed were it in our power to Procraſtinate our days, could we ſtrike off the nimble Chariot Wheels of time, and with *Joſhua*, *Bid the Sun ſtand ſtill*; could we Lengthen out our days to ſome thouſands of years, and thoſe to be imployed in the moſt Entire and Choiceſt of Worldly Fruitions, without interruption or decay, it would ſeem a little more plauſable to place our Hapineſs here. But alaſs, who is there Ignorant of this ſaid Truth, that the Life of Man is but a Span Long; *Are not my days few*, ſaith *Job*, *I go where I ſhall not return, even into the Land of Darkneſs and ſhadow of Death*; and none knows but the next breath he draws to cool, and freſh his Lungs, may be that Gale of wind to waft him on the Coaſts of Eternity: For when God is but Angry, all

our days are gon; Man is ſick and dies, Man periſhes, and where is he, to day hees ſet up, and to morrow he ſhall not be found, for he is turn'd into duſt, and his purpoſe Periſheth, and his pomp terminateth in a neglected Grave; and in a few Months, after the Mourners have gone about the Streets, and the Solemnity of his Funeral is over, is forgotten, as if he had never been; and if ſo, why ſhould a thinking Man place his Happineſs here? Why ſhould an Eternal Spirit Addreſs a Vapour? Why ſhould an Immortal Soul court a *Phantom*, ſince the Spirit of Man cannot delight in any thing that's Terreſtial? here indeed are Diverſions that pleaſe and tickle the Senſes, but cannot give the leaſt Delectation to the Soul, nor any wiſe ſatisfie the Capacity of a Mans heart; for if a Man could give Silver as Stones, and *Cædars* as the Wild *Figtrees*, that grow abundantly on the Plains; could he provide Men Singers and Women Singers, and be croun'd with the Poſſeſſions and Delights of the Sons of Men, could carrouſe it continually with *Belſhazar* in full Bouls; yet all theſe, or the higheſt degrees of Luxury, could not defend the moſt daring *Belſhazar* from the Sting of a Tormented Conſcience; for in the midſt of Laughter, the Soul and the Heart too if Wicked, will be ſad, then all the Jewels in *Sauls* Crown cannot Comfort, or create a chalm within.

For If a Man have a defiled Conſcience, tho he were deckt

deckt with Majeſty, and arrayed with Beauty and Honour, tho he waſh his Paths with Butter, and the Rocks power him out Rivers of Oyle, tho he purchaſe a confluence of all created b eings, and could leave tokens of his pleaſure in every place: Were he the Univerſal Governour of the Ocean, and could not only Trace, but Controul and Command the Motions of the Sun and Stars; yet the Reſtleſs and Ambitious Curioſity of his Soul, would aſpire beyond the higheſt Heavens, prye after ſome unreveal'd Excellency, ſome abſconded Felicity, which the whole extent of this finite Material World with all her perfections, could in no ways afford, there being an inherent Inſufficiency riveted in the very Eſſence of Sublunary beings; that we can never allay our thirſt at theſe Puddles of *Egypt*, but if wee'd be ſatisfied we muſt be undefiled, and ſo ſoar a-loft to the Cyſterns of the Cœleſtial *Canaan*: For that nothing can Extinguiſh the thirſt of a mans Soul, but the Waters of the Well of Life, and the unfathomable Sea of the comforts of another World.

And thoſe that hope for happineſs in any Worldly fruitions, without walking in the way of the Lord, O! how is their Ignorance to be pittied; O! with what compaſſionate Tears ſhou'd that Carnal ſtate of man be lamented, by all that underſtand the worth of a Soul: What hart doth not bleed for miſerable man that is perpetu-

petually mockt with Shadows, cheated with falſe deluſive appearances, infatuated and betrayed by their own Senſes, whilſt they riſe up early, and lye down late, to ſeek reſt in trouble, and life in death, that run away from true Bleſſedneſs, whilſt they pretend to purſue it; Deſcend patiently to the Chambers of Death, and Dream of nothing but an Earthly Paradice, till they are amidſt the infernal Regions.

Now if their Circumſtances are thus, to be Lamented that hope for happineſs in Riches, Honours, &c. or a Concurrence of all theſe, then ſure it concerns all to enquire what will make them bleſt and happy. My ſecond General propos'd.

True happineſs conſiſts in being inveſted with as good a ſtate and condition, as our Natures are capable of receiving; but ſince the united ſufficiencies of all created beings are not enough to ſatisfie our boundleſs deſires, and to make us truly and for ever perfect and happy. The Soul of man being unſatiable in its appetite, as its immortal by nature; It only remains then that our aſpirings muſt terminate in an infinite and eternal being, in acquaintance and Fellowſhip with God the fountain of all Bleſſedneſs, who alone being infinite, is able to fill the Soul of man which is Immortal; and therefore we may be aſſured, that true happineſs can conſiſt in nothing elſe but

but a Regenerate ſtate, in a devout contemplation of God, in being a Child of his, an heir of Salvation, in ſupernatural Grace, and the bleſſed conſequents thereof.

Theſe are the Sources and Fountains of all happineſs, theſe the parents of Joy and Peace; thoſe Rich and mighty Cordials that raiſe Nature, make all Purity, all Glory, lay all Storms, compoſe all Mutinies in our Boſoms, extinguiſh Troubles, prevent Fears; ſuch a one can commune with his own Heart without uneaſineſs; reflect on's Actions without regret, is ever raiſed above Malencholy, being continually cheriſht by Cœleſtial influences, and ever incircled in Gods Love. Theſe are the never failing Fountains that perpetually feed and ſupply thoſe Rivers of endleſs and unſpeakable Bleſſings; theſe are the Springs which for ever maintain that Ocean of Infinite and Eternal joys; theſe are thoſe ineſtimable Jewels, which whoſoever is ſecurely poſſeſt of, his heart is ſo fil'd with love and admiration, that for ever he imploys his deareſt and moſt noble thoughts on them, ever fixing his Eyes, and uniteing his heart to God the ſupreme Good.

And now Secondly, The way to compas this Bleſſed ſtate, our deareſt Redeemer tells us in his Sermon on the *Mount Mat. 5th.* alſo, the *Patriarches, Prophets, Apoſtles*, and wiſeſt of Mortals from their own experience

ence aſſure us,that there is no Happineſs without Holyneſs. Therefore they paſſionately excite us, to elevate our affections above theſe contemptible vanities and Fallacious Ideas, and to eſteem them as Droſs in compariſon of thoſe ſublimated Excellencies which are at Gods Right Hand, and if any ever hope to be happy here or hereafter; he muſt be Innocent, Charitable, Humble, Harmleſs, and Honeſt, he muſt love Righteouſneſs and hate any thing that is foul or ill, he muſt have a heart firſt fixt on Heavenly things, and ſubſervient to theſe; the neceſſary affaires of his honeſt and lawful occupation. And thus let the way of the Lord be your path then doubt not of being Bleſſed for his Graces will enliven you, his Bleſſed Spirit will be your guide, his Holy Angels your guard, his Word your Light, and Bleſſedneſs your end, *for Bleſſed are the undefiled in the way, that walk in the Law of the Lord.* Which leads me to my third propoſed, to tell you what it is to be undefiled: and when we may be eſteemed ſo.

Firſt, To be Undefiled is to practice the precepts in the 15*th. Pſalm.* and to continue in a general and ſincere courſe of Piety and Charity, St. *James* in his firſt Chap. and laſt Verſe tells you, *That pure Religion and undefil'd before God is to viſit the Fatherleſs and Widow in their affliction. and to keep your ſelves unſpoted from the World.* You'l anſwer we may viſit the Fatherleſs and Wid-

Widdow, but we cannot be unſpoted; Its own'd that we cannot wholly put of the Rags of Corruption till we wholly put on the Roabes of Righteouſneſs, for that this Heredetary Corruption Sin will ſtick to our Fleſh, tho we waſh this *Ethiope* with all our *Hyſop* it will be black, tho we rub this *Leopard* with all our *Nitre*, it will have ſome ſpots. The fleſh will be a Solicitous *Dalilah* about us, and within us, will Sojourn in our *Meſec*, and dwell in our Tents of *Kedar*, for while we are in this Village, where our *Martha* dwells, our affections will have a taſt of Earth, we may correct our Corruptions, but cannot wholly deſtroy them, we may and muſt be without blame, as to groſs Inniquities, but cannot be without blemiſh, as to ſinful Infirmities, till we paſs this *Egypt*, and arrive at the Cœleſtial *Canaan, for there, and there only are the Spirits of Juſt men made perfect and undefiled.*

God never had but one Son here without Sin, Except him the beſt of Saints have been ſubject to it, and are Enjoin'd to confeſs their daily Treſpaſſes; for to tred always firm in the paths of Righteouſneſs without ever ſliping, to walk ſo uprightly as never to fall, by ſecurity, weakneſs, or inadvertency; is a task not for a man but an Angel: if there be any Souls ſo happy as to triumph over all Infirmities, and

ſo

ſo watchful as never to be ſurprized, they are peculiar Jewels kept in undiſcern'd Cabinets. Tho ſome of the Patriarchs, Apoſtles, and bleſt Martyres ariv'd to ſuch Sanctity, that they ſeem'd uncapable of Acceſſions; St. *Paul* ſaid, *He was Crucified to the World*, &c.

Yet in this Age of ours, not to be ſubject to diſorderly deſires, not liable to Irregular Motions, wandring thoughts, dulneſs in Duty, is only the Priviledge of Souls cloathed with Immortallity; for our underſtandings are not ſo clear and bright, but they may be deceived, nor the bent of our affections ſo ſtrongly ſet, but they may be perverted. Where is the Love that has nó drfect? where is the hope that has no fear? we have ſecret Diſpoſitions in Nature, to folly and error, we have ebs and flowes of Blood, and Spirits; Diſtempers within, roughneſs of Converſation without, Irkſome Adverſity and Flattering proſperity, Nay, we have Souls ingaged with our Senſes, and theſe with the World, we are ſo ſurrounded with variety of objects, which through the Intervention of our ſenſes, leave their Ideas in the head, that the Eye of the mind can no more help looking on them, then not to wink when a blow is given; ſo that we muſt almoſt forget our Nature to be undefiled wholly, amongſt ſo many Snares.

Such

Such ſagacity of Judgment, ſuch ſtrength of reſolution, ſuch felicity of circumſtance, we can never ſoar to, but that ſome venial defect may lurk in the moſt ſanctified Soul, but we muſt have a care of miſtaking contracted habits for frailties of nature, of cheriſhing any ill motions, or throing our ſelves into the way of Temptations, when we have warnings without or miſgivings within, for then they ceaſe to be Sins of ſurprize, or infirmity become Mortal, bring diſhonour to God, injury to our Neighbour, and defile our Nature. Therefore,

Secondly, Here's the Characteriſtic of the good man that ſhall be eſteemed Undefiled, he is one tho he ſtumble accidentally on a Temptation, yet he lies not in the Mire, but riſes again preſently, and keeps on his Journey, gets ground of his Paſſions, and is ever accompanied with earneſt deſires, and ſerious endeavours, he preſſes after the Mark of the high calling, and when any Temptations ofered, yeilds not to it; for its not his Sin to be Tempted, or to feel that he is ſo, but the Evil is in yeilding and doing, ſince his actions are at his command, tho not always his mind: Its Corruption allures, but conſent defiles, therefore the good man, ſo ſoon as any unlawful object is repreſented to him, he reſiſts the Lure, and the Fight of *Rephidim*

begins, ſometimes *Iſrael* prevails, and ſometimes *Amalec*, but he ſtill holds up his hand, that is, lets his thoughts be Elevated, and his mind Soaring, till he hears the ſhout that *Iſrael* hath the day: And when he hath once got the Victory, ſets a ſtrict watch at the Cinque-port of his Senſes, and ſo ſoon as the Devil ſhews him the World, diſpiſes it, and the Devil too, with a, *Get thee behind me Satan;* And when ever he is Aſſaulted, by any darling Sin, he never parleys, but if in danger of being overcom'n, immediately throwes himſelf into the Armes of his Bleſſed Saviour, in full aſſurance that he hath given his good Angels, more power to preſerve him, then the Evil to hurt him, and reſts his hand on the Pillar of Faith and Prayer, till *Amelec* fly before him.

Now ſuch a man that thus ſtruggles for the Conſolation of the Spirit, more then for ſenſible things, that ſoars aloft on the Wings of Faith and Love, that Prunes the Luxuriancy of untaught Nature, and Animal inclinations, that adornes himſelf with thoſe three Heroick Virtues, Faith, Love, Humility; that is fervent and frequent at Publick and Private Devotions, is a conſtant Communicant, is juſt in all his dealings, is Generous in Charity, like the Sun reaches his rayes to all, is active in the work of Angels, thankful to God, Meek and Courteous in Behaviour to men, is modeſt in Proſperi-

ty

ty, chalm and reſign'd in Adverſity, that acts as upright-ly as if he were to dye to day, and give an account at night.

Now ſuch a man that thus fears the Lord his God, and does all the good he can to men, may be as well aſ-ſured, he is in the ſtate of Salvation, as that Jeſus is Riſen; ſuch a Man may be ſatisfied he is undefiled ac-cording to Gods Will, tho not according to the purity of his Auguſt Eſſence; and may be confident that his defects for Chriſts ſake ſhall be Pardoned, and the ſpots that he hath contracted, ſhall be by the Roab of his Righteouſneſs covered, and ſhall compaſs the Bleſſed Conſequents of being Undefiled: My laſt propoſed,

First, If God ſees it good, you need not doubt of being Externally bleſt, ſince the ſervice of God hath a Friendly regard to worldly Proſperity; *Godlineſs* ſaith the Apoſtle, *is profitable to all things having the pro-miſes of this life*, 1 *Tim.* 4. 8. for that piety inclines Men to be ſerious in their thoughts, temporate in their lives, and diligent in their callings, which Enriches; Read *Deut.* 28. Wicked men indeed may proſper by induſtry, but its not by the bleſſing, but ſufferance of God, and ſuch cannot be ſecure in what they poſeſs, ſince none are ſafe from Ruine, but in the favour and protection of God the giver, *Pſal.* 73, 12. 18, 19 *verſ.* For the Elect's ſake, God made the World, Enrich't and Redeem'd it.

Therefore if thou would'ſt be bleſt with Riches, then be undefiled, and thou haſt the God of wealth, and the Minerals of the world, to ſupply thy wants; if Honours thou haſt him that makes the Heavens Bow, and Scepters and Diadems obey: if Wiſdom, the treaſures of Eloquence and Riches of Eternal Knowledg are in his boſom; all which God will certainly give thee, if for his Glory and thy good.

Indeed God does not in the Goſpel promiſe Wealth, Honour &c. to every man; on this Theatre all are not to act the part of Princes, and Prelates, becauſe the perfection of human Affaires, requires a Diverſity amongſt men (Kings and Subjects, Maſters and Servants) Biſhops and Deacons, el's a general Æquality would uſher in a general confuſion.

But Secondly, If thou haſt not an affluence of Temporals, yet if undefiled, thou art ſecure at leaſt of Chriſts Legacy, internal Peace, which is the greateſt Bleſſing, ſince a man is nothing but his mind, and if that is out of order, the greateſt Treaſures, the higheſt Honours, and the ſofteſt Pleaſures, cannot make happy, but poſeſſing peace of mind, tho never ſo poor, thou Enjoyeſt infinitely more comfort in it, then in the affluence of all created beings, without it,

it; and all that walk in the paths of virtue, need not doubt of compaſſing this Peace; ſince ſuch act according to their Primitive Inſtitution, and are in the ſtate they were intended, and in that condition for which God deſign'd them; But in the revers, thoſe take much pains to looſe their Labour, that hope to finde Peace in the paths of Impiety.

No, its only a Religious life can make us happy, for that ever yeilds comfort, when we ſtand moſt in need of it, in times of Affliction or Death, Holineſs being of that Bleſſed Nature, that it makes all Light within, tho there be nothing but Darkneſs without.

Riches, Honours, Pleaſures and Preferments, (ſaith a Pious Author) are coy, and keep diſtance, and when we looſe them, leave us with a weeping Eye, and heavy Heart; but Virtue never leaves us till we force and chaſe it from us: Its the Sovereign Cordial in all conditions, its not loſt in the many Misfortunes that ſurround us, it continues ſweet and comfortable in Miſery, gives Courage in Adverſity, makes us rich in Poverty, is ſuch a Phyſitian that puts us to little Expence, yet gives ſuch Cordials, as chear the Body, Spiritualize the Soul: Nay, is the precious Pearl that purchaſes our Peace to all Eternity, and ſhines on our Souls even here with Beams of Everlaſting Glory.

For

For ſuch thoughts of Spiritual Raviſhment and Unutterable rapture, are many times inſpired by the Spirit of Comfort, into the hearts of Gods Children, who have oft in a ſweet ſhowre from Heaven, a whole Sea of Comfort powred on their Souls; and by the Glorious fruition of inward Peace and Joy, have ſuch a lively perception and foretaſt of Everlaſting pleaſures, as is beyond the power of the Heart of Man to conceive, or the Tongue of Angels to expreſs, as if with one hand they had already laid hold on the Crown of Life, and had got one ſtep within the Gates of Heaven; for the Angels whom they fill with joy, with a careful tenderneſs and alacrity, become their Guardians, and ſerviſable to them.

All the Creatures are in League with, and reconciled unto them, and with a ſecret reverence do adore that Sacred Character of Divinity that is imprinted on them, for by being Undefiled. Theſe regain all, that *Adam* by his fall loſt, and are happier in this ſtate of Integrity, then *Adam* in that of Innocency; for the Undefiled are now Sons of God, and Heirs to his Kingdom: Nay, for ought we know, ſuch may hereafter Equalize, if not, Tranſcend the ſplendour of Angels, for tho the Undefiled are lower then Angels by Creation, yet they are ſuperior by Adoption: Angels have only Glorified Spirits, but the Undefiled ſhall have Glorified Souls, and Spi-

Spiritualized Bodies too, even like our Saviour; for the Felicity and the Eternity of ſuch ſhall be like his, as in the 1 Epiſtle St. *John*, 3 Chap. 2, 3 Verſes.

And if the Pious enjoy ſuch Tranſcendant Peace and Glory, who in his wits then wou'd not deny himſelf the pleaſure of a moment, to be pleaſed for ever? Who then wou'd not be a Chriſtian for a few years, to Reign with Chriſt for ever?

Did you ſee as I oft do (in my Viſits of the Sick) I ſay did you ſee Sinners in that ſtormy night, when Vengence reaches them, or Death pangs ſeizes them, you could no more deſcribe their Fears and their Cares, then fathom the Firmament: But on the contrary, if you were ſenſible of the Tranſports of Peace and Comfort that Pious Souls enjoy in the time of Afflictions or Death, it wou'd make the greateſt Debauch turn *Puritan*, and the moſt refin'd Epicure a Mortified Saint; it wou'd charm the Cup out of the hand of the Drunckard, and lure the Sinner from the ſofteſt Embrace.

For when the Undefiled reſign their already Mortified Bodies into the cold hands of Death, their Souls being conſcious of an upright and unſpoted Life, have created Eyes ſo Fortified, that many enjoy Tranſcendent Rayes of the Beatific Viſion before Departure. Nay, being ſupported by

by the Spirit of Comfort, feel no ſting in Death, diſcover no darkneſs in the Grave; no amazment at that Great and Terrible day of the Lord, when the Sun ſhall be turned into Darkneſs, and the Moon into Blood, when the Heavens ſhrivel together like a Scrole of Parchment, and the high and mighty Mountains skip out of their places, like rouſed Hindes.

Then Laſtly, The Undefiled ſhall be Eternally Bleſt, they ſhall not only look down with Cheerfulneſs into the Grave, but in to the other World without terror, where they ſhall not ſee a Court of Juſtice, but a Throne of Grace, where they ſhall not ſee a ſevere Judg, but a kind Father, and a Saviour, who died for them, ready to pronounce them Bleſſed, and ſet the Crown of Glory on their Heads; where they ſhall ever be in the converſation of Excellent Perſons, brave minds, Charitable Souls, and dear Friends; be eas'd of all their Pains, reſolved of all their Doubts, freed from all their Fears, and happy beyond their Hopes; having Scepters made to fill their Hands, and mighty Glories to Crown their Heads, and forever enjoy Gods deareſt delights, and higheſt Glories; for, *Bleſſed are the Undefiled in the way that walk in the Law of the Lord.*

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